

THE WANADA BULLETIN

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR AND ABOUT FRANCHISED NEW CAR DEALERS IN THE WASHINGTON AREA

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In Memoriam: Jack Pohanka

It is with sadness and a profound sense of reflection that WANADA reports the passing of its longtime dealer member and past chairman, John J. Pohanka of Pohanka Automotive. He was 92 years old.

Automotive News did a video tribute to Jack as part of their morning news update on Tuesday; [you can view the video here](#).

Words that first come to mind when thinking about Jack Pohanka's remarkably stellar auto dealer career are *innovator*, *pace-setter*, *industry leader*, and *Renaissance Man*. Clearly, Jack was all of these and so much more. Building on the Oldsmobile dealership opened by his father, Frank Pohanka, in Washington, D.C. in 1919, Jack took over the business in 1960, moving the store subsequently to Marlow Heights, Md., where it operated for many years. Since then, Jack and his son Geoff Pohanka, along with partner Scott Crabtree, have grown Pohanka Oldsmobile into Pohanka Automotive, which today boasts nearly a dozen franchises in 16 separate dealership locations, employing over 1,600 staff, in Maryland, Virginia and, more recently, Texas.



Early on in his career, Jack became a staunch proponent of professional training for dealership personnel. This was dramatically evidenced by his founding of the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) in the mid-1970s, which, in turn, established *Technician Certification* that has been the industry's benchmark for high quality auto repair for consumers ever since. Shortly thereafter, Jack marshalled the development of the National Automobile Technician Education Foundation (NATEF), which since then has evaluated and certified curricula for automotive technician training and education industrywide.

A dealer association leader *extraordinaire*, Jack chaired WANADA in the late 1960s, going on to chair the National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) in the mid-1970s. A chairman of The Washington Auto Show in the 1960s, Jack later led WANADA's effort to restore the Auto Show in D.C., after a 13 year hiatus, by making it *the* public show event that opened the Washington Convention Center (WCC) in 1983, and, subsequently, WCC's grand successor center opening in 2003. Today, The Washington Auto Show is widely regarded as one of the preeminent annual auto shows on the international industry circuit.

A graduate of Princeton University, Jack has been honored in his career as the *TIME Magazine* Dealer of the Year, *national winner*. In addition, Jack was the recipient of the Automotive Hall of Fame Distinguished Service Citation. More recently, he received special recognition by the Washington National Opera, at a special event honoring him at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, where he has been a years-long WNO leader and supporter.

With the current COVID-19 pandemic shutting down societal interaction across the U.S. and the world, funeral arrangements have not been made. When that happens, WANADA will publish them.

To Geoff Pohanka and Jack's many friends and family members, WANADA extends its sincerest sympathy.

Virginia Resumes In-Person Dealer Sales Licensing Exams

[The Virginia Motor Vehicle Dealer Board](#) has announced that they will begin offering salesperson licensing exams once again, on a by-appointment basis.

Tests will be administered on a by-appointment basis, with the anticipation that [MVDB staff](#) and field representatives will travel to dealership locations to administer the exams. [According to VADA](#), up to two exams would be administered at one time, though the board will be flexible in accommodating all requests.

To request a licensing exam appointment, please contact Ann Majors at the MVDB at (804) 367-1100, ext. 3016#, or by email at ann.majors@mvdv.virginia.gov. WANADA thanks our friends at the Virginia Automobile Dealers Association for their work in helping the commonwealth restart the certification process.

NADA Chairman Peter Welch to Retire at the End of the Year

The National Automobile Dealers Association [announced last week](#) that President and CEO Peter Welch will retire at the end of 2020. Welch has been with the association since 2013, following more than 20 years at the California New Car Dealers Association. He joined CNCDA as their director of government and legal affairs, and served from 2003 to 2013 as the association's president and CEO.

Since moving across the country to work at NADA's headquarters in Tysons Corner, Peter Welch helped amplify the voices of franchised auto dealers across the country, and worked to deliver several important legislative victories important to the members he serves. Under his leadership, NADA ensured that the 2017 tax reform bill [adequately protected](#) car and truck dealers, helped [ensure fair access](#) to GAP insurance products for active-duty military members and their families, and advocated strongly for auto dealers when meeting with Trump Administration officials on energy and trade policy matters, including the Administration's decision to supersede California's [CARB emissions standards](#).

To that end, NADA fought valiantly to have the federal government declare auto sales and service staff to be "critical infrastructure" components during the COVID-19 pandemic. The U.S.

Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency agreed, and auto dealer services were deemed to be [essential by the federal government](#). Auto sales have been able to continue uninterrupted in most U.S. states throughout the pandemic, while other retail industries have seen their work restricted far more dramatically.

We at WANADA are grateful to Peter Welch for his years of service advocating on behalf of franchised new auto dealers. We greatly appreciate all he has done to enhance NADA's influence as an advocacy group, and all franchised dealers have benefitted tremendously from his leadership.

Virginia DMV Offering Limited In-Person Services; D.C. Hopes for June Re-Open

The [Virginia DMV](#) has begun offering limited in-person services at nine of their branches on an [appointment-only basis](#). In keeping with the restrictions of [Executive Order 62](#), which extended Northern Virginia's stay-at-home order until May 29, none of those branches will be located in the D.C. suburbs; the closest open branch to our region will be in Spotsylvania County, located at [5700 Southpointe Centre Boulevard Fredericksburg, VA 22407](#).

The Fredericksburg-area branch will be open Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; [you can make an appointment online at this link](#). Available in-person services will include drivers license renewals and RealID requests, titling services, "vital records" requests, and knowledge testing for learners permits. For a full list of available services, [please click here](#).

The DMV has said that more branches will open on a rolling basis throughout the late spring and summer. In the meantime, dealers can access many DMV services online at [dmv.virginia.gov/onlineservices](#). As has been the case since the beginning of the year, manual titling and processing work can be mailed to the Manheim Auto Auction locations in Fredericksburg and Harrisonburg; [you can find those addresses here](#).

Meanwhile, the [DC DMV issued a dealer update last Friday](#) that in-person DMV services remain closed. However, the District's DMV system hopes to resume in-person services on June 9, the day after Mayor Muriel Bowser's [most recent stay-at-home order](#) is set to expire.

As has been the case for the last two months, dealer transactions can still be processed via mail by submitting the paperwork to the DC DMV at 95 M Street SW Suite 300 Washington, D.C. 20024, though there are no expedited services at this time. You can also access many online resources through the [DC DMV Dealer Services Page](#).

Latest Update on Stay-at-Home Orders in the D.C. Area

The governors of both Maryland and Virginia have allowed much of their states to begin the lengthy and gradual re-opening process, but the D.C. area, where the majority of both states COVID-19 cases have been found, remains under the same status quo of the last two months.

While much of Virginia shifted to the first phase of the commonwealth's [Forward Virginia](#) plan last Friday, Gov. Ralph Northam issued a [two-week extension](#) of "phase zero" in Northern Virginia, and later amended it to also include the city of Richmond and Accomack County on the Eastern Shore, which has been [ravaged by two outbreaks](#) at poultry plants.

The rate of positive tests continues to be higher in the densely-populated portions of Virginia just outside of Washington; in fact, the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, and the city of Alexandria together account for roughly half of the commonwealth's [total COVID-19 cases](#). Fairfax alone accounts for 25 percent of the COVID cases in the state, despite being roughly 12 percent of the state's population.

Auto sales and service work is allowed to continue in both the Maryland suburbs and in Northern Virginia, under the same patron capacity and social distancing requirements that have been in place over the past few weeks at minimum. Workers in both states are required to wear face coverings while on the job; the facemask mandate has been in place across Maryland since at least mid-April, but the Virginia mandate just went into effect on May 15 as part of [Gov. Northam's measure](#) allowing much of the state to begin the re-opening process.

In Maryland, Gov. Larry Hogan began allowing counties to relax certain business restrictions and capacity limits last Friday at 5 p.m. However, none of the state's seven largest jurisdictions implemented [Gov. Hogan's "stage one" order](#) as written, with three counties in our region ([Montgomery](#), [Prince George's](#), and [Charles](#)) extending their current stay-at-home orders for at least two more weeks.

Montgomery and Prince George's counties account for more than half of all of [Maryland's confirmed COVID-19 cases](#). On Tuesday, the state also reported another 1,784 confirmed cases of COVID-19, its highest one-day total of new cases since the pandemic began.

[Anne Arundel](#), [Frederick](#), and [Howard](#) counties all implemented modified orders, which generally allow for a resumption of manufacturing and limited retail services that had been shuttered since late March. However, Anne Arundel and Howard retained the patron capacity limits that have been in effect since Gov. Hogan's initial stay-at-home order on March 30, while Frederick's order allows certain businesses with a footprint under 10,000 square feet to operate at up to 50 percent capacity, in line with the state's "stage one" order.

In the District of Columbia, Mayor Muriel Bowser [extended the city's stay-at-home order](#) and non-essential business closure until June 8, though in recent days she has said the District is making progress on reducing both the rate of new cases and the proportion of positive tests. In theory, the city could potentially relax the stay-at-home order earlier than June 8, though nothing has been announced as of the time this Bulletin was published.

Memorial Day Holiday Hours Signs Available for Members

WANADA has created Memorial Day holiday hours signs for our members. Dealership personnel can publish special showroom and service department hours if they differ from your current operating status during the ongoing health crisis. To download the form, [please click here](#).